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urged against the indiscriminate dissemination of learning, it is at least certain, that, until the natural bent and instinct of the human mind, which is directly opposed to that of the subordinate orders of created beings, be radically changed, no surer antidote can be found than that which is supplied by mental discipline and education, for the correction of those debasing evils attendant on ignorance and stupid insensibility." One might ask this learned author, what sort of insensibility that is, which is not "stupid." Several pages of such rignmarole the publishers have had the bad taste to prefix to one of the most admirable productions of modern genius. It may not do much harm, but the incongruity is highly offensive. In another edition we hope they will omit this deformity.

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7. — *The Clouds of Aristophanes; with Notes.* By C. C. FELTON, Eliot Professor of Greek Literature in Harvard University. Cambridge: J. Owen. 8vo. pp. 194.

BOTH as a master of style, and as the model in that strange and inimitable thing, the earlier Greek comedy, Aristophanes has always secured high regard; and even Christian Fathers nursed their tastes by familiarity with his terse Attic. But as initiating us into the mysteries of private life at the most interesting age of Athenian history; as revealing to us the workings of the democratical system, after the death of Pericles and during the war with Sparta, when the citizens were crowded together within the walls; he possesses an historical value which puts him by the side of Thucydides, but which only the present age has learned to appreciate. Among the comedies of Aristophanes the "Clouds," which Mr. Felton has brought in the present valuable edition before American students, deserves a high rank on account of its object, the skill with which it is managed, and the distinguished person who is made the butt of the poet's ridicule. Its object is to satirize the sophists who were trying to get the education of the Athenian youths into their hands; who taught systems of philosophy leading to Atheism, overthrew morals, and gave to their scholars an art of persuasive rhetoric, which polluted the courts and deceived the Assembly. The evil influences of the sophists are shown in the instance of an old country gentleman, who puts himself to school in order to learn a way of escaping payment of his debts; and who, after finding himself too old to become a proficient, persuades his son, a fashionable young

man devoted to horses, to take his place. The son imbibes the sophistical system with a vengeance, and pays back the price of instruction to his father in the shape of a sound beating ; which he maintains his right to do according to the axioms of his masters. The charm is now broken ; the father, seeing the bad results of his own evil desire to cheat his creditors, and of the immoral instructions of the sophists, sets fire to the school where such lessons are taught. So far all is well ; and if Gorgias, Protagoras, or even Prodicus had been the specimen of a sophist master, posterity would have found no fault with the comic poet.

But when Socrates occupies this place, — Socrates, whose mind was formed and life passed in laying bare the falsehoods of the sophists ; who more than any one else upheld the principles of morals ; who despised rhetoric ; who encouraged no one to engage in political life until he had learned how to govern himself, — when, we say, Socrates, who was at the opposite pole from the sophists, is made one of their number ; the first question that every one asks is, How can the poet have been so deceived ? The answer, as correctly given by Mr. Felton in his excellent preface, is, that Socrates in some singular traits of character had a comic side, and that the men of his time could not understand him altogether. The small things with which he often began his conversations must have appeared very ridiculous to one who did not or could not see the high moral end which he wished to reach. The fact too, that Critias and Alcibiades, young men of high family and detestable morals, sought his society in order to become political leaders, must have spread his fame in the same way as that of the sophists was propagated. And as for the poet, he was a thorough conservative, and, like many such men now, may have felt an indiscriminate dislike to every thing new ; philosophy, therefore, and sophistry were both bad, because they began to exist at Athens together. Because faith in the divinities, as well as public morals, began to decay as philosophy began to grow, this must be the cause of such lamentable results. We suspect then, that Aristophanes had a like bigotry in his conservatism, which blinded him to the difference between Socrates and the sophists ; let us be permitted to add, that we have found something of the same blind and narrow spirit in his commentator Mr. Mitchell, who seems to throw himself into the arms of Aristophanes with the faith of a lover, as though the comic poet could never overdraw or turn aside from the truth.

Mr. Felton's valuable preface is followed by the text of the play as William Dindorf has given it in his "*Poetæ Scenici*."

The judgment of this learned critic concerning Aristophanes deserves more regard perhaps than that of any other scholar of the present day. Before his edition of the dramatic poets appeared, he had finished the voluminous edition begun by Invernitz and Beck ; and had prepared one or two besides of the simple text. The play, as it appears in Mr. Felton's edition, is printed with great neatness and uncommon correctness.

Mr. Felton's notes, though occupying a greater space than the play itself, are by no means of unnecessary length. There is much of course in a comic writer, who deals with the minutæ of every-day life, in an age remote from ours, that needs explanation. Many allusions must be made known to us before such a writer can be justly appreciated. Parodies of contemporary poets must be pointed out. The flashes of wit must often be caught, so to speak, on their path, and held up to the reader that he may see them as an Athenian would have seen them. Satire must be shown in its meaning and its aim. All this and more need attention on the part of an editor, beside those special difficulties of a grammatical or exegetical kind, which occur in authors who use another and a very different vehicle of thought from our own. These wants of the reader Mr. Felton has provided for in notes, which could not well be made shorter, without doing injustice to the work of art and of high merit, selected in the present instance. Indeed it would be easier to select passages which might, with good reason, have more said about them, than to cut out any thing that already appears. Mr. Felton's mode of illustrating his author is extremely happy. The witty passages especially are set forth in their full meaning, and in such a manner as to show that the commentator enters into the spirit of his author, and has a hearty relish for the comic. Sometimes a modern equivalent is given for the folly satirized, or the wit which attacks it ; and we are made strikingly to feel that Athens with its follies is at our own doors. In short, the notes are of that kind, that they acquaint us with the spirit of Aristophanes, and of the age which he sought by satire to cure of its faults.

Mr. Felton deserves, and will gain, the thanks of American scholars by introducing the "*Clouds*" to their notice in the company of such instructive and (what is a rare merit among editors) such entertaining notes. He has properly, in his Preface, at once condemned the poet for his coarsenesses, and given the play entire. There are plays of Aristophanes which are essentially gross and unfit for any young man's perusal ; but the "*Clouds*" contains only four or five passages of an exceptionable nature, while the general tendency is in favor of

morals. If the "worse Reason" and the scholars of sophistry are unprincipled, it the more condemns the fountain from which they drew their draughts.

8. — *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home*. By the Author of "Hope Leslie," "Poor Rich Man and Rich Poor Man," "Live and Let Live," &c. &c. New York: Harper & Brothers. In Two Volumes. 12mo. pp. 275 and 297.

WE yield to none, as our readers well know, in admiration for Miss Sedgwick's genius, and especially for the philanthropic tone of her writings. In the elegant department to which most of them belong, she, more than any other of our authors, has struck the key-note of a vigorous home literature. By her warm, and, for the most part, intelligent sympathy with American institutions, she has been led to the true source of an American writer's inspiration. In the volumes before us, we must make free to say that she has not dealt quite fairly with her reputation. It will circulate them, without doubt; but it will perform that profitable service a little at its own cost. It would of course be impossible, without a degree of pleasure, to listen to a familiar account of adventures abroad from so intelligent and amiable a traveller as Miss Sedgwick; and it would be a high gratification to receive from a personal friend a series of such letters as those which she has here given to the public. But when one takes up a printed book of the kind, it is with expectations, such as we fear this falls short of satisfying. It makes no pretensions to be any thing more than a record of personal observations in the course of a common tour, and even this story it tells in a manner not absolutely lively; and, though the companionship of a person of good sense and kind feelings over such ground cannot be absolutely wearisome to the reader, it is scarcely enough to carry him contentedly through two volumes.

When transferred from the family to the shops, they ought at all events to have been subjected to a different kind of revision. The public ought not to have to pay for such remarks as the following (which occur in the first half of the first volume), and we know not how many more, to them equally insignificant; "Mr. Hallam reminded me of ———;" "Sidney Smith's wit was a sparkling stream of humor, very like ——— when he is at home;" "If her [Mrs. Opie's] manners were not strikingly conventional, she would constantly remind